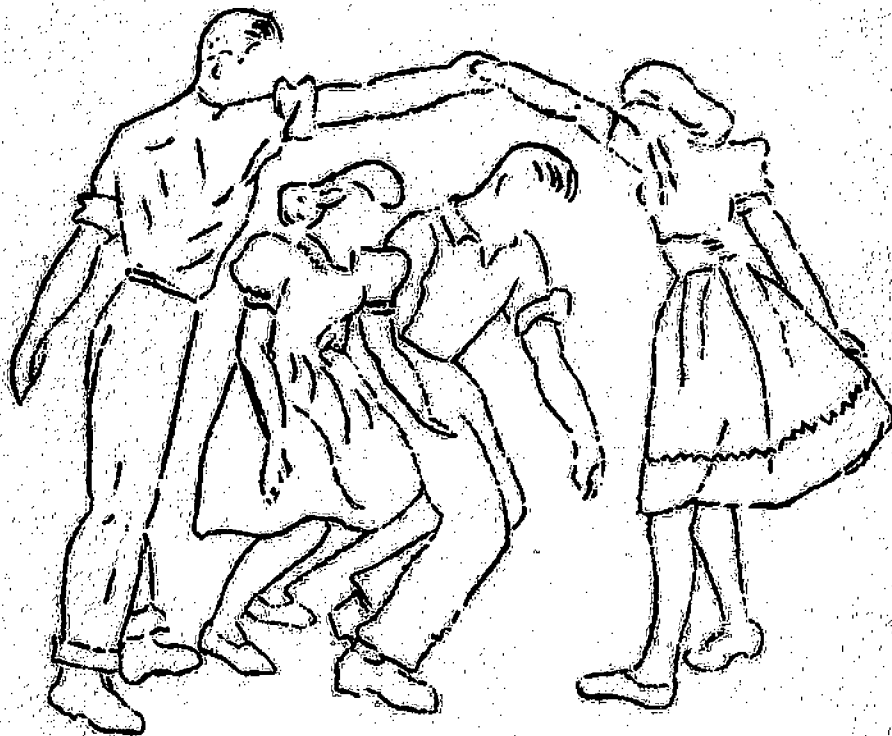


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PRIMITIVE



AMERICAN
SQUARE DANCE

52 E. 13 ST. N.Y.C.
MARGOT MAYO, LEADER

GROUP



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"PROMENADE"

Official organ of the American Square Dance Group.

"The purposes of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with all who sincerely entertain similar views".

(quote from the A.S.D.G. Constitution.)

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Our readers have been most patient and understanding bearing with us during these months of our experimenting, and we feel that the time has now arrived when we should offer not only our thanks, but an explanation of our aims and plans for the future.

In the past, "Promenade" has been the result, mainly, of the efforts of two individual members of the Group, Alan Swartz has done most of the work, hard work, of putting out each issue, mimeographing, typing and clerical work, and Margot Mayo has written most of the articles and drawn most of the sketches. The aims of "Promenade" have been to serve as the official organ of the American Square Dance Group, to express our views and ideals, and to present authentic folk material in as practical and pleasant a manner as possible. "Promenade" has never attempted to become a magazine of and for scholars. But, on the other hand, we have never presented material, the authenticity of which we doubted. "Promenade" has been and will continue to be as informal as folk dancing itself, as joyous, we hope, as folk singing.

The criticisms and support of many authorities in the folk field have inspired us to continue our work, and the kind and enthusiastic response to "Promenade" has convinced us that there is a place in this hectic world for a publication such as ours.

The enlarged staff we plan for the future will enable us to put out a better magazine both in content and in appearance, and since the work will be divided into various departments we feel that our offering will be of greater value to you and to us.

"Promenade" has been such great fun!

Margot Mayo
Alan Swartz

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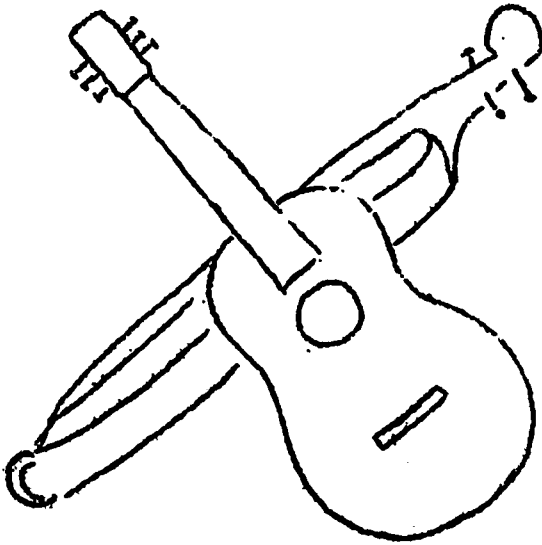
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"Promenade" thanks Pat Tobias for this month's cover design, Irving A. Schiffman for his review of "Dances of Our Pioneers", and Manny Weiner for his description of "Adam and Eve" and his pairs of dance figures. "Promenade" particularly thanks all of its friends who work "sight unseen".

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE AMERICAN FOLK

THE DULCIMER



According to the Dictionary of Musical Terms by Theo. Baker, the dulcimer is "A very ancient stringed instrument greatly varying in construction and form; typical characteristic, the wire strings stretched over a soundboard or resonance-box and struck with mallets or hammers. The dulcimer was the precursor, and is often called the prototype, of the pianoforte."

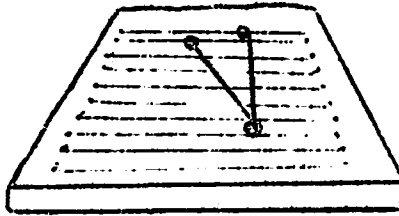
Now, according to Jean Thomas, of the American Folk Song Society, the dulcimer is a much different instrument. We quote from her book The Singin' Gatherin' in which we find a most interesting chapter on mountain instruments and their usages. "The dulcimer, mentioned in the Book of Daniel, is the earliest of mountain musical instruments. It is usually a yard in length, shaped much like a fiddle, except that the neck is no more than seven and a fourth inches long. There are three wires, the first tuned on E above middle C, the other two on middle C. The melody is carried on the first wire by means of a "noter", a small stick...held in the left hand, while all three wires are brushed with a turkey feather held in the right hand, giving it a zither-like accompaniment."

Both of these definitions are correct, of course, since one refers the ancient European dulcimer and the other to the American mountain dulcimer. The mountain instrument is a very simple one, simple in line and limited to range. Our dulcimer, as it is played today, is laid across the lap of the musician, and strummed, as Miss Thomas explains, with a feather. The effect is frequently weird to trained musical ears, sounding more Oriental than Western because of the peculiar harmonic combinations. The lower strings are used as drones, sounding always the same tones. The melody is attained by the use of the noter and is of the sliding type rather than the more definite staccato technique of usual guitar playing.

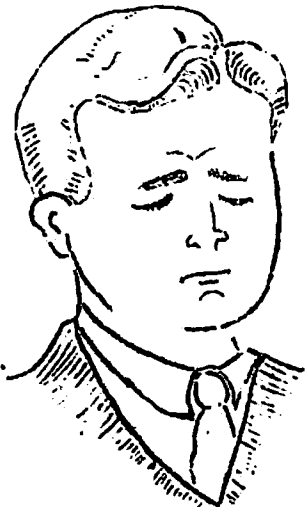
Dulcimers are becoming rare now, even in the mountains, since store-bought fiddle and guitar (not to mention radio or phonograph) have replaced the hand-made instruments to a great extent...and dulcimers are, of course, always made by hand, even in this day and age. It is difficult to locate a man who remembers how to make a dulcimer, and, once having located him, it is even more difficult to get him to actually bother to make the instrument for you. Too many other more important things to do...crops, for instance!

Since most people have little opportunity to see or hear these folk instruments, the interest created by the Victor recordings of John Jacob Niles and by the Columbia recordings of Andrew Rowan Sommers has led to much speculation as to just what this instrument with the lyric name really is. Now, Mr. Niles, himself, says that the instruments he uses for the records' accompaniment and at his folk-song recitals are not typical dulcimers. He has designed them, and in some cases made them, to suit his own purposes and they are no longer simple three or four stringed mountain instruments. The Niles instruments are lovely to look at, with their beautiful lines and exquisite woods. He has added many strings to the original three used by the mountaineers, and the effect can be and frequently is more full and more musical than the original dulcimer. John Niles has also changed the frets on the fingerboard so that his instruments are played in chords, harmonically, using no melody line at all.

Mr. Summers, on the other hand, uses a simple mountain dulcimer of four strings only, and "noted" with the small stick in the left hand. He uses the melody played on the dulcimer as a second voice to his own, frequently giving the effect of two voices singing in harmony. His accompaniments are interesting in that the melody played on the top string is frequently in contrary motion, that is, the melody of the instrument has a different line than that of the voice, thus lending movement as well as harmony to the accompaniment.



And speaking of Mr. Summers, we traipsed all the way out to Brooklyn College to hear a recital of his the other night, And since folk song recitals are few and far between these days, we should like to tell you about it. The selection of songs on the first part of the program was very good, since Mr. Summers presented in that section, the songs he has made available to the general public through his recordings. He used the dulcimer as accompaniment for his singing during this part of the program, and the presentation was as simple and sincere as his recordings. But, for the latter part of the program, Mr. Summers used piano accompaniment and immediately the whole atmosphere was changed ! There was a sudden break, a pulling back into reality, and the program became the ordinary song recital. This was in spite of the fact that most of the songs Mr. Summers sang, in the latter part of the evening, were typical folk songs. There is, unfortunately, an irresistible temptation for arrangers to drown out folk songs in lush and ornate accompaniments. On the whole, however, the evening was well worth the subway ride !!!



Mr. Summers is really much better looking than this, but it was such fun sketching him during that Brooklyn College recital, that we are taking the liberty of reproducing this sketch. ! We do hope Mr. Summers will forgive us----

P.S. People do look awfully strange when they are singing, though, don't they ?

FOLK DIALS

The only program of folk interest which is on the air regularly these days at a definite time, is the American School of the Air broadcast, Tuesday mornings at nine fifteen o'clock. This particular section of the School's program is entitled "Wellsprings of Music" and consists of authentic folk music presented under the supervision of Alan Lomax, who is Assistant in charge of Archives of American Folk Music of the Library of Congress. Wow ! We always wondered what his complete title was !!

Quoting from the brochure put out by the Columbia Broadcasting System, "the purpose of this program is to mark out an exciting path along which children may be led to appreciation of music as an integral part of man's day-to-day living. The wellsprings of music, like those of other arts, are human reactions to the world about us. They have their source in the things men do, see, think, and feel, whether at work or at play".

This seems of greatest importance to us, and these programs are exciting, not only for children, but for all of us as well. The series is divided into two sections, folk music and art music, alternating. The October programs, for instance, consisted of games and play parties in the folk series on one Tuesday and "music for fun" in the art series the following week. During the four programs presented during October, besides those mentioned above, were the following: "Songs of square dances" on the folk broadcasts, and "Symphonic dances" in the art series.

The November schedule is as follows:

Nov. 12th...	Songs of Make Believe	Folk Music
Nov. 19th....	Ballets and Fairy Tales	Art Music
Nov. 26th....	Animal Songs	Folk Music

* * * * *

The series entitled "Adventures in Music", presented by station WNYC, has been offering some enjoyable and instructive material. Since this program has been shifted recently, we advise you to be on the lookout for it, as it is well worth the effort. One program which we tuned in on, quite by accident, on Wednesday afternoon, Oct 23rd, was one of Irish folk music. The commentary was so interesting that we dropped our work and sat down to take notes. And we were thrilled to hear a version of a folk song we learned from a cousin in the Kentucky mountains ! It has a charming refrain, "Let him go, let him sink or swim, if he don't care for me, I'm sure I don't for him !" We love that.....

* * * * *

The election broadcasts fairly swept away those splendid programs, "Back Where I Come From", and although the last one we managed to hear was certainly not worthy of the precious offerings, we would be very sorry to have this series go off the air permanently. The particular broadcast we refer to is the one about "city folk lore".....it was slightly embarrassing after the real worthwhile material which had been used previously, but everyone slips now and then, and we still look forward to the return of this program to the air.

DIALS

Unfortunately, some of the finest programs of folk music such as the Vass Family, The Song Spinners or the Golden Gate Quartet, are not scheduled regularly, so we must advise watching the radio columns with constant vigilance.

Sunday	11:30 AM	WNYC	Negro Melody Singers
	2:45 PM	WABC	Golden Gate Quartet
Monday	10:30 PM	WABC	Back Where I Come From
	1:30 PM	WOR	*Zeke Manner's Gang
	2:15 PM	WJZ	Hocsier Hop
Tuesday	1:00 PM	WOR	*Zeke Manner's Gang
Wednesday	1:15 PM	WNYC	Series of Folk Singers
	10:30 PM	WABC	Back Where I Come From
Friday	10:30 PM	WABC	Back Where I Come From
Saturday	11:00 AM	WEAF	Song Folks Quartet

*Commercialized "Hill-billy" program.

We would like to call your attention to the new series of folk song programs, Wednesdays, 1:15 over WNYC. This series includes such ballad singers as Burl Ives, John Jacob Niles and Woodie Guthrie.

Memories of an old negro revival meeting are to be found in the "Sheep and Goats Club" program. Jazz of the finest "blues" variety is played for the goats while spirituals and folk songs are played for the sheep.

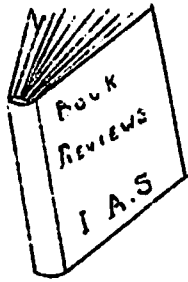
If you hear any new programs you think should be mentioned here, we'd certainly appreciate your telling us about it.

* * * * *

DISCS

The Decca Album number 66 entitled "Old Time Fiddlin' Pieces" is one of the best set recordings of this type we have yet encountered! The selection of pieces is excellent, since the volume not only contains a great many old favorites, known to the general public, but also includes these less worn out tunes which are known and loved by the old timer dancers, callers and musicians. Some of the better known tunes played by Clayton McMichen, a champion fiddler, are Turkey in the Straw, Soldiers' Joy, Devil's Dream, Rickett's Hornpipe, Fischer's Horne Pipe, and Arkansaw Traveler. The other jelly old favorites are Old Hen Cackled, Fire in the Mountain, Ida Red, Sally Gooden, Sourwood Mountain. In all, the volume contains eighteen rollicking dance tunes, many with words and some with calls; but all usable for square dancing. Those with calls, and those with singing, are so reproduced as not to interfere with the calling of a "live" caller, and the members of the A. S. D. G. have found them great fun to dance our own particular collection of figures to. One thing that is grand about this collection is that although many different tunes are played on one side of a record, these do not upset the caller, and are combined in such a way as to enable a set to finish a dance even if a particular tune has been changed....

* * * * *



"Dances of our Pioneers"

by

Grace L. Ryan

Most books on folk dancing open their preface with a few lines devoted to the importance of American folk dances and then go on to the disappointment of the reader, to include dances from every part of the world except our own U.S.A. "Dances of Our Pioneers" is a book about our own people. Furthermore - it's not a bit old fashioned (as you might imagine from the title). Although these dances originated with our pioneers, they are just as refreshing to the present generation - and will be to the generations to come. That is why "Dances of Our Pioneers" is an outstanding book. By limiting itself to American folk dances, it perpetuates the techniques of an important art and fills a necessary social and recreational need.

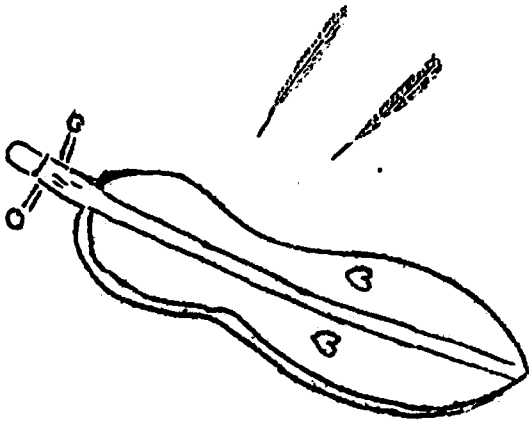
The book contains quadrilles, (square dances), contra dances, circle dances and couple dances. Arranged in logical fashion, with the music first, the call next, followed by the formation, explained simply and in detail. Sufficient "extra" material or "changes" are included to give variety for many an evening of folk dancing. Musical arrangement, by Robert T. Bonford, is simple enough for an average pianist to follow and every piece is limited to one page. The words or calls might have been written under the music to indicate the timing - but that is not too serious a criticism. From a teaching point, an excellent step is taken by Miss Ryan in giving the call twice. --- once as a complete unit, and then again under each description.

Many dancing teachers labor through new dance routines in textbooks trying to follow the changes or progressions with a pencil. This is not necessary here. [] (boy) and ○ (girl), B1 and G1 are usual symbols found to guide the uninitiated. In this book we are fortunate enough to be guided through some of the more difficult steps by the excellent illustrations of Brooks Emerson. Our artist friend has done more than draw diagrams. He has captured the spirit of our dance and of our people.

It is difficult to find fault with this excellent book. I would have liked Miss Ryan to give us the sources of her many dances or at least to indicate from what part of the country a particular dance comes. It would be interesting to know that the dance we are enjoying comes from New England, or Kentucky or Wyoming. This omission, however, is a minor sin.

I like "Dances of Our Pioneers". After you have learned its dances, you will still love its illustrations and hum its tunes. It is a real book -- not one to tuck away in the corner of your bookcase. You can be proud to have it on your desk.

INTERESTING PEOPLE



In our last issue, in the section entitled "Discussion", we presented a summary of the Columbia Masterworks album "Old World Ballads in America". We liked these recordings so much that we had a feeling we would like Andrew Rowan Summers, the folk singer who made the records. We ferreted him out....we liked him !

Sometimes, when one hears a person's voice, one draws an imaginary picture of him and feels very satisfied that this is really the way the person looks. Boy ! Were we wrong about Mr. Summers ! We pictured him as a dignified, quiet middle-aged gentleman, very distinguished, of course, with slightly greying hair. Mr. Summers is not in the least frightening !

He is young, very sincere and direct in his manner and thank heavens, he is informal. Although he has studied "classical music", and flings "modes" and technical terms about with terrifying abandon, he never becomes pedantic or superior either in his approach to folk music or in his dealings with human beings.

Andrew Rowan Summers was born in Abingdon, Virginia, and was educated at the University of Virginia. Virginia is a state exceedingly rich in folk material and Mr. Summers gained his knowledge of folk music directly from the 'native' singers. To quote Mr. Summers, "These people in the remote mountainous regions of the South, and particularly in Virginia, still sing the marvelous old ballads from England just as their ancestors, the first colonists in America, sang them three hundred years ago".

Mr. Summers has a feeling for the people and their music, which, we believe will never allow him to become "arty" or theatrical in his presentation of folk songs. He has tried, and successfully, to present these folk ballads in the simple, traditional style of singing which is inherent in the native folk singer. And, although he is a lawyer by profession and cannot devote his entire energy to the folk field, we firmly believe, and trust, that we shall hear more from this young man.

Andrew Rowan Summers' guiding light in his folk work has been John Powell, who has done so much valuable work in preserving folk music here in America. We are grateful for the exacting and rigid code he has placed upon this young singer.

We sincerely hope that Andrew Rowan Summers will make more recordings very soon, for the first album is definitely a valuable addition to the limited field of true recorded folk music !